

V.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER REFERRING TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE  
"DOUGLAS ROOM," STIRLING CASTLE, FROM THE REV. CHARLES  
ROGERS, LL.D., F.S.A. SCOT. COMMUNICATED BY JOHN STUART, Esq., SECRETARY.

ARGYLE HOUSE,  
STIRLING, *January 18, 1856.*

DEAR SIR,

I send herewith a printed copy of a lecture, which I hastily prepared for delivery to the School of Arts here, a few days after the fire, which, on Sabbath, the 18th November last, consumed the most ancient portion of the Old Palace of Stirling. By this fire, as you are already probably aware, was destroyed the interesting apartment known as "the Douglas Room," in which James II. put to death William eighth Earl of Douglas. To this apartment, and its curiously carved oak canopy, you will find some reference at pages 12 and 13 of the accompanying lecture. Since the lecture was published, I have discovered, much to my satisfaction as an antiquary, that a very considerable portion of the canopy has been preserved. A star which adorned the centre is almost entire; and there are large and interesting fragments of the elaborately decorated border, which likewise contained the inscription. A part of the inscription has also been secured. These interesting remains are at present kept in an apartment connected with the Armoury of the Castle, under the charge of an official, to whose temporary custody they have been entrusted by the officer of Engineers. It is understood that, about the beginning of March, or sooner,

the officer of the Engineer Department will report to Government on the subject of repairing or reconstructing the injured fabric, when it may be expected that the authorities of the War Office will decide on the practicability or propriety of restoring the Douglas Room. My decided opinion is, that a restoration will not be carried out; the expense of the undertaking would be very considerable; the restoration would serve no end of public utility, and could hardly gratify the antiquary; and the public money is wholly required at present in the vigorous prosecution of the war. But even should a restoration of the Room be resolved on, the charred fragments of the original canopy would be found useless for the purpose. In their present condition they are only suitable for preservation in a museum or other place of public exhibition. In these circumstances, I would beg leave earnestly to urge on my fellow-members of the Society of Antiquaries the propriety of taking steps to secure for the Museum these interesting relics. . . .

Begging the favour of your submitting this communication, with the accompanying pamphlet, to the Society at the first Meeting, I have the honour to be, &c.

JOHN STUART, Esq.